

7-1-1989

## Health and Environment, Health, Drug Abuse

The Mickey Leland Papers & Collection Addendum. (Texas Southern University, 2015)

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### Recommended Citation

The Mickey Leland Papers & Collection Addendum. (Texas Southern University, 2015), "Health and Environment, Health, Drug Abuse" (2015). The Mickey Leland Papers & Collection Addendum: Education, African Americans Repairs Education, African American Racial Inequities (1989). *Series 4: House Committees, Washington, 1978 - 1989*. Series 4, Box 171, Folder 2871. Paper 1274.  
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COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Note:

ML's addition to  
H13 prepared  
statement  
for hearing  
on 7/19/77

Mr. Chairman,

I hope in whatever we  
do as a nation of Democratic  
ideals that whatever we  
do for our citizens whether  
it is health care delivery or  
providing for public housing  
or just ~~guarding the~~ ~~making~~  
providing for the public  
security that we never  
ever violate the sanctity  
of our citizens civil rights.

Statement for Mickey Leland  
AIDS and IV drug abuse  
Subcommittee on Health and the Environment  
July 19, 1989

**THANK YOU MR. CHAIRMAN. MR.  
CHAIRMAN, SINCE THE ONSLAUGHT OF  
THE AIDS EPIDEMIC, LEGISLATORS,  
PUBLIC POLICY EXPERTS AND HEALTH  
CARE PROVIDERS HAVE HAD TO MAKE A  
NUMBER OF DIFFICULT AND  
CONTROVERSIAL DECISIONS IN AN  
EFFORT TO STOP THE SPREAD OF AIDS.  
NOT THE LEAST CONTROVERSIAL OF  
THESE CHOICES, IS THE ISSUE WHICH  
WE ARE EXAMINING HERE TODAY, CLEAN  
NEEDLE EXCHANGE FOR IV DRUG  
ABUSERS.**

**THIS IS AN ESPECIALLY DIFFICULT**

ISSUE FOR ME GIVEN NOT ONLY THAT MY HOME TOWN OF HOUSTON HAS THE FOURTH HIGHEST INCIDENCE OF AIDS IN THE NATION, BUT ALSO BECAUSE MY CITY HAS BECOME A HUB FOR DRUG TRAFFICKING IN THIS COUNTRY. THE INCIDENCE OF SUBSTANCE ABUSE IN HOUSTON HAS DRAMATICALLY INCREASED DURING THE LAST FEW YEARS.

COMPOUNDING THESE STATISTICS IS THE KNOWLEDGE THAT AIDS IN IV DRUG USERS HAS MOST ADVERSELY AFFECTED THE MINORITY COMMUNITY. ACCORDING TO INFORMATION FROM THE CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL, 80% OF AIDS VICTIMS WHO HAVE A HISTORY OF IV DRUG ABUSE ARE MINORITIES.

TRAGICALLY, 1300 INFANTS TO DATE  
HAVE BEEN BORN WITH AIDS. THREE-  
FOURTH OF THESE INFANTS ARE  
CHILDREN OF IV DRUG ABUSERS AND  
THEIR PARTNERS.

WHILE I BELIEVE THAT REDUCTION  
IN THE SPREAD OF AIDS AMONG IV DRUG  
ABUSERS IS OF CRITICAL IMPORTANCE,  
I CANNOT ENDORSE NEEDLE EXCHANGE  
PROGRAMS AT THIS TIME. I DO  
HOWEVER BELIEVE THAT THE ISSUE  
MERITS CAREFUL CONSIDERATION, AND  
COMMEND CHAIRMAN WAXMAN FOR  
SCHEDULING THESE HEARINGS.